

REMARKS

As advised in a telephone conversation between the undersigned and the Examiner, the applicants request that an interview be conducted to expedite the prosecution. Applicants would like the Examiner to see a sample of applicants' thermal recording sheet. The Examiner suggested that any claim amendments be submitted first by facsimile, and this communication responds to that suggestion.

Applicants' thermal recording sheet, as exemplified by the sample, is a transparent, unmarked film whose front and rear surfaces are not distinguishable from each other, either by eye or by hand. Yet, it is important to distinguish between the front and rear surfaces, because only the front surface has a recording layer on which an image can be recorded.

Applicants enable the front and rear surfaces to be easily distinguished from each other in the following manner. The sheet has four curved corner portions. Applicants mark one of the corner portions, and leave the other three corner portions unmarked. Thus, the marked corner portion has a curvature radius larger or smaller than the unmarked corner portions. It is the *position of the marked corner portion* that distinguishes between the front and rear surfaces.

For example, if the marked corner portion is positioned at the lower left corner of the sheet, as shown in Applicants' Fig. 1, then that position indicates that the front recording surface is facing the viewer. If the marked corner portion is positioned at the lower right corner, then that position indicates that the rear surface is facing the viewer. Knowing which surface of the sheet has the recording layer enables an operator to properly load the sheet in an image recording device.

Claims 11 and 17 were each amended to emphasize that each sheet has one marked corner portion and three unmarked corner portions, and that the marked corner portion has a curvature radius larger or smaller than the curvature radius of the unmarked corner portions, and that

the front thermal recording surface is differentiated from the rear surface based on the *position* of the marked corner portion.

Reference No. 1 (U.S. Patent No. 6,878,670 to Seki, et al.) discloses only a heat-sensitive recording material employing a color forming reaction between a leuco dye and a developer. Reference No. 1 discloses *no* corner portions of different curvatures, nor any means to differentiate between a front thermal recording surface and a rear surface of the material.

Reference No. 2 (Japanese Patent No. 02-084382 to Kishimi) discloses an apparatus for thermally recording an image, characters, or the like on a heat sensitive material with a thermal head, such that an area of the heat sensitive material other than the area in which the image or the like is thermally recorded in response to an input signal is thermally recorded at a predetermined density level. The heat sensitive material used in this apparatus has four corner portions each of which has the *same* configuration as shown in Fig. 1, Fig. 6 and Fig. 7. However, it does not have at least one marked corner portion with a curvature radius which is larger or smaller than the other corner portions, nor any means to differentiate between a front thermal recording surface and a rear surface of the material.

Reference No. 3 (Japanese Patent No. JP2002-059653 to Yoshida) discloses a card constituted of a card base having a reversible thermal recording layer capable of presenting visual information rewritably, wherein the reversible thermal recording layer is formed of a rewritable leuco dye layer, while the card base is formed of a base material having transparency. The card has four corner portions each of which has the *same* configuration as shown in Fig. 1 and Figs. 4 - 7. However, it does not have at least one marked corner portion with a curvature radius which is larger or smaller than the other corner portions, nor any means to differentiate between a front thermal recording surface and a rear surface of the card.

Reference No. 4 (U.S. Patent No. 6,972,781 to Tytgat) discloses a method of generating a hard copy of an image on a substantially rectangular heat sensitive recording material having rounded corners. Reference No. 4 does not make reference to the number of rounded corners, the position of the rounded corners, and the curvature radius of the rounded corners, nor any means to differentiate between a front thermal recording surface and a rear surface of the material.

Reference No. 5 (U.S. Patent No. 6,106,910 to Tan, et al.) discloses only a print media with a near infrared sense mark. The near infrared sense mark is used for triggering an automated operation such as printing, advancing, cutting and/or dispensing a print medium. Reference No. 5 fails to disclose a print media with four corner portions and makes no reference to the curvature radius of corner portions, nor any means to differentiate between a front thermal recording surface and a rear surface of the print media.

For these reasons, the claims 11 and 17 are deemed to be allowable. Claims 12-16, which are dependent claims of claim 11, and claims 18-20, which are dependent claims of claim 17, are also allowable for the same reasons that claims 11 and 17 are allowable.

Wherefore, a favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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